

**HB4637 Regional Transportation Authority Act**  
**House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee**  
May 21, 2013

I would like to thank Chairman Schmidt and the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for hearing my testimony in opposition to HB 4637. My name is Ryan Cowmeadow and I am a constituent of the honorable David Rutledge. I am also the Advocacy Specialist for the Area Agency on Aging 1-B. The AAA 1-B is responsible for providing services to over half a million older adults in our region which covers Macomb, Monroe, Livingston, Oakland, St. Clair and Washtenaw counties..

The Area Agency on Aging 1- B remains committed to our position of improving public transportation options of older adults of all ages and abilities through the implementation of the Regional Transit Authority. HB 4637 would enable municipalities to opt out of participation in the Regional Transit Authority within 1 year of its creation with a majority vote of the municipality's governing body, or at any time after 1 year by providing a withdrawal resolution approved by a 2/3 majority vote of the municipality's governing body.

HB 4637 undermines the actions taken by this legislature less than a year ago, which after 40 years and 23 failed attempts established an act creating a Regional Transit Authority for Southeast Michigan. Should communities elect to opt out of participation in the Regional Transit Authority, residents of southeast Michigan may be left with the same unconnected and scattered network of public transportation options that has presented mobility challenges for many years.

The National Household Transportation Survey conducted in 2009 by the Federal Highway Administration indicated that more than 1 in 5 adults age 65 and older do not drive. As the older adult population of Michigan continues to grow with a projected increase of 44% by 2020, reliable public transportation options become increasingly important. More so, public transportation that recognizes that individuals' lives do not stop at city, township, or at county lines is paramount. This is not simply an issue of the quality of life for older adults, but for youth, disabled individuals, commuters, environmentally conscious, those with limited incomes who do not have the luxury of owning a car, and all residents of southeast Michigan who need congruent and consistent transportation options.

I would like to close my testimony with the simple and eloquent quote by Aristotle, "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." We at the Area Agency on Aging 1-B believe that this was the message conveyed through the passage of the Regional Transit Authority Act on December 19, 2012. The best way to achieve the goals of the Regional Transit Authority as established by Public Act 387 is to have all municipalities involved and participating. Opposing the amendments outlined in HB 4637 would assure this outcome.

Thank you for your time and this opportunity. I would be happy to field any questions you may have regarding my testimony.

Submitted by:

Ryan Cowmeadow  
Advocacy Specialist  
Area Agency on Aging 1-B  
29100 Northwestern Highway, Suite 400  
Southfield, Michigan 48034  
(248) 262 1282  
rcowmeadow@aaa1b.com